

Suggested Substitute for Paragraph Bracketed on Pages III-21 and III-22

While the military task in Vietnam is beginning to assume some aspects of a conventional limited war against overt external aggression, our over-all Vietnam task remains that of making it possible for the South Vietnamese to cope with and suppress an insurgency which is externally directed and supported, to rectify the social ills on which that insurgency batters, to re-establish law and order, to revive and sustain the economy, and to create a viable, independent political structure. This total effort is thus one in which the people of South Vietnam must play the primary role. We and the other Free World nations who have come to South Vietnam's assistance can only help. No matter how great be the resources we commit to the struggle, we cannot provide the South Vietnamese with the will to survive as an independent nation, with a sense of national purpose transcending the claims of family, friendship or regional origin, or with the ability and self-discipline a people must have to govern themselves. These qualities and attributes are essential contributions to the struggle only the people of South Vietnam themselves can supply.

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The estimates of enemy strength are subject to frequent change and it is difficult to spell out at any one time the detailed changes in enemy force structures; however, it seems quite certain that total enemy strength did decline during 1967. Most of the decline took place among the irregular forces. The strength of enemy regular combat forces has been maintained at a relatively constant level of about 115,000-120,000 during the past two years. The increased participation of NVA forces accounts for the enemy's ability to maintain this force level. Forces in NVA units increased from about 9,000 in June 1965 to between 50-55,000 at the end of 1967. In addition some 10,000 NVA troops have been placed in VC combat units to help them maintain their strength at about 60-65,000 troops. The number of administrative support troops who back up the combat regulars is at least 35,000-40,000. The number of guerrillas has been declining during the past year and is estimated at between 70,000-90,000.

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These losses are replaced by recruitment within South Vietnam and infiltration from the north. The VC have had considerable difficulty in meeting recruitment goals. Although we can make only rough estimates of actual recruitment we believe that it has declined from a level of about 7,000-8,000 men a month during 1966 to something on the order of 4,000 to 6,000 men a month by the end of 1967. The balance of the manpower drain must be filled by infiltration. Infiltration from the north averaged about 7,000 men a month during the first half of 1967. It will be several months before we have final estimates for the second half of 1967 but preliminary indications are that it has been continuing at about the same rate.

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